



NetNews

an online newsletter devoted to adult literacy

September, 2004

LDA of Minnesota

Vol.5, No.1

Supplemental Services

Currently, it is required that 2% of total Adult Basic Education (ABE) funding in Minnesota be set aside to provide statewide supplemental services such as staff development, technological development, support for disabled learners, support for communities of color, distance learning, and other innovative projects. Non-profit organizations or professionals aligned with consortiums are awarded supplemental service grants on a yearly basis to provide a variety of statewide activities.

LDA's grant activities promote outcome-based achievement for learners...

LDA of Minnesota has again received supplemental services grant funding for FY 2005. The purpose of this first issue of the 2004-2005 school year is to describe LDA grant activities available to any ABE program manager, instructor, tutor, or learner in the state of Minnesota at no cost. LDA greatly appreciates the continued support and funding from the Minnesota Department of Education-ABE for our initiatives geared to the needs of adult literacy.

LDA's FY 2005 grant activities all (1) support ABE services statewide, (2) focus on educational results, and (3) promote outcome-based achievement for adult learners. Activities include:

1. **Diagnostic Assessments**
2. **Practitioner Circles**
3. **Information & Consultation**

1. Diagnostic Assessments

LDA will continue to provide diagnostic assessment services for ABE, GED, or ESL learners. There are three types of assessment:

1. **Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)** for ABE learners who demonstrate "unexpected" significant difficulties in any academic area and seek a comprehensive learning profile and documentation of a learning disability in order to access appropriate instruction or accommodation.
2. **GED Accommodations (GED)** for GED learners who demonstrate "unexpected" significant difficulties in the academic areas of reading, writing, or math and seek to request GED testing accommodation using Form L-15.
3. **Learning Disabilities/ESL (LD/ESL)** pilot for ESL learners who are struggling with the acquisition of language or literacy skills despite adequate English exposure and seek documentation of a significant learning difficulty in order to access appropriate instruction, accommodation, or support services.

All three assessments involve a process of screening, application, interview, formal testing, test scoring and interpretation.

All three assessments result in a comprehensive written report with recommendations for prescriptive instruction.



NetNews is supported by a grant from the Minnesota Department of Education, Adult Basic Education.

4301 Highway 7, Suite 160 ■ Minneapolis, MN 55416
(952) 922-8374 ■ www.ldaminnesota.org
Learning Disabilities Association of Minnesota

In this issue...

- *Diagnostic Assessment...*
- *Practitioner Circles...*
- *Information and Consultation...*
- *LDA of Minnesota...*

page 1-2
page 2-3
page 3
page 4

For the **SLD or GED assessment process**, the first step (after a minimum enrollment of two months) is completion and submission to LDA of the *Screening Checklist for Adult Learning Disabilities* on pages 4-6 to 4-9 of the *Learners with Disabilities Resource Guide*. Following review of the screening, an ABE application will be sent to the instructor for the learner to complete and submit to LDA. Appointments will be scheduled after both the screening and application forms have been received and reviewed.

Learners living **within the seven county metro area** will be tested at LDA with feedback conferences held at the ABE site.

➤Contact Marn Frank: mf@ldaminnesota.org

Learners living **outside of the seven county metro area** will be tested at an ABE center site as long as there are two or more referrals to pre-arrange as a “traveling assessment”.

➤Contact Mike Anderson: ma@ldaminnesota.org

For the **LD/ESL assessment process**, the first step (after a minimum of 160 hours of ESL instruction) is the completion and submission to LDA of the *Screening Interview of Learning Difficulties for ESL Adults and History of English Language Learning and Instruction for ESL Adults* on pages 73-77 and 105-107 of *TAKING ACTION*. All appointments will be scheduled at the ABE site following review of this essential language and literacy background information.

➤Contact Marn Frank: mf@ldaminnesota.org

A new diagnostic assessment activity will be the piloting of **computerized reading assessments** with selected metro ABE programs and learners. LDA will purchase the assessments, facilitate pre and post testing, and gather data from participating programs. This information will be used to determine the “best” assessment of reading strengths and weaknesses for prescriptive instruction. It will not be replacement for CASAS or TABE, but a recommended supplement in order to determine what adult readers don’t know and what reading skills to teach.

➤Contact Mike Anderson: ma@ldaminnesota.org

2. Practitioner Circles

LDA is excited to share our instructional resources ***TAKING ACTION*** and ***The ART (Adult Reading Toolkit)*** through statewide “practitioner circles”. Practitioner circles are experiential trainings designed to involve literacy practitioners in applying research to their classroom settings by allowing for reflection, discussion, and demonstration.

- LDA requires at least ten participants - any combination of interested ABE program managers, instructors, or tutors.
- Prior to the circle, participants will receive a copy of the selected LDA resource and reflection questions.
- The circles will be from 1.5 to 2 hours in length at [any ABE site in Minnesota](#).
- LDA staff will facilitate a discussion focusing on the research, existing practitioner knowledge, and application of ***TAKING ACTION*** or ***The ART*** to your ABE, GED, or ESL classrooms.
- For ***The ART***, LDA staff will demonstrate a lesson that incorporates multiple reading components.
- Continuing education units will be provided.

Please use the descriptions below and at the right to generate interest in a “practitioner circle” at your staff or consortium meeting.

Understanding ESL Adults with Learning Difficulties and TAKING ACTION

There are many reasons why ESL adults may be struggling in an educational setting. Even though we are programmed for oral language, the challenges of language and literacy acquisition are often complicated by other personal, physical, emotional, educational, or socio-cultural factors. Sometimes there is the presence of a learning disability or significant learning difficulty that interferes not only with learning, but with everyday performance.

Each participant in this “practitioner circle” will receive an advance copy of ***TAKING ACTION – a resource guide for instructors serving ESL adults with learning difficulties or learning disabilities*** along with reflection questions for a presenter-led discussion on the chapter information and the pilot LD/ESL diagnostic assessment. Recent case study results will also be shared.

DISCOVER THE ART! (Adult Reading Toolkit) for Beginning Reading Instruction

Many ABE learners, native and non-native English speakers, experience difficulty with reading skills. They may know words by sight, but struggle with decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling), fluent reading, and comprehension of text. They fail to show progress on silent reading tests because they lack basic reading skills. **The ART** was developed by LDA of Minnesota with ABE, ESL, and GED instructors, tutors, and learners in mind. It includes six chapters covering all five components of reading instruction, a toolkit with reproducible activities, and appendices of sound and word lists. The purpose of **The ART** is to bridge research with reality and practice.

Each participant in this presentation will receive an advance copy of **The ART** along with reflection questions for “practitioner circles”, and presenter demonstration of how to incorporate research-based phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency activities into beginning reading instruction.

DISCOVER THE ART! (Adult Reading Toolkit) for Intermediate/Advanced Reading Instruction

Many ABE learners, native and non-native English speakers, experience difficulty with intermediate or advanced reading skills. They know how to read, but struggle with multi-syllable words, new vocabulary, or comprehension of longer text. They are challenged by reading material at the pre-GED or GED level. **The ART** was developed by LDA of Minnesota with ABE, ESL, and GED instructors, tutors, and learners in mind. It includes six chapters covering all five components of reading instruction, a toolkit with reproducible activities, and appendices of sound and word lists. The purpose of **The ART** is to bridge research with reality and practice.

Each participant in this presentation will receive an advance copy of **The ART** along with reflection questions for “practitioner circles”, and presenter demonstration of how to incorporate research-based decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies into intermediate/advanced reading instruction.

3. Information and Consultation

LDA is committed to providing quality information and consultation about learning disabilities or related learning difficulties, instructional strategies, accommodations, best practice for reading, and our grant activities and outcomes. LDA intends to continue providing these services through timely responses to **phone call or email questions** or concerns. Please feel free to contact either Marn Frank (mf@ldaminnesota.org) or Mike Anderson (ma@ldaminnesota.org) at 952-922-8374!

LDA staff has recently completed a variety of **information sheets** answering common questions about learning disabilities, other related disorders, special education due process, legal rights, instruction, and accommodation. They are currently available in paper form and will soon be accessible from our website.

LDA will continue to create and disseminate the online newsletter **NetNews** during the 2004-2005 school year. Possible upcoming topics include LD/ESL assessment outcomes, updates on the computerized reading assessment, reports from the practitioner circles, and ADD/ADHD.

A new activity will be the coordination of an **Adult Learning Disability Support Group**. This group will meet monthly beginning in early November at LDA of Minnesota or sites to be determined. The topics of discussion will be generated by the group. The purpose is to provide professional and personal support to adult learners diagnosed with LD, family members, and other interested parties.

LDA is working with other supplemental service providers to continue **practitioner research** in the area of reading. Practitioner research is an approach to professional development where the instructor learns from his/her own research and practice with learners. The process includes learning about reading research findings, developing and refining your own reading research question, designing an instructional plan, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting data, sharing outcomes and conclusions, and making an action plan based on your research. Participants in this group may also become members of LDA's **Advisory Committee**.

An Introduction to LDA of Minnesota

The National Institute of Health reports that one out of every seven Americans has some form of a learning disability. A learning disability can affect one's ability to speak, listen, read, write, spell, reason, recall, organize information, and do mathematics. Statistics show that approximately ten-percent of the population has a learning disability. According U.S. Census data from 2003, this would be equal to 373,382 adults in Minnesota who face learning difficulties every day.

LDA of Minnesota is a private, nonprofit agency whose mission is to maximize the potential of children, youths, and adults with learning disabilities or related learning difficulties so that they and their families lead more productive and fulfilled lives. Since the beginning of LDA's 37-year history, agency efforts have enabled thousands of people in the Twin Cities' metropolitan area and Greater Minnesota to learn critical basic skills, increase the likelihood of successful job training, improve employability, and enhance their quality of life.

Become a member of LDA!

Many adults you teach each day have learning difficulties and even learning disabilities. A membership to LDA will help to keep you up-to-date on the latest information in the field! As a member of LDA, you will receive:

- Access to the latest information and research on learning disabilities
- Complimentary subscriptions to LDA's local and national newsletters
- A chance to connect with others who have similar interests

Member information:

Name

Address

City / State / Zip

Phone

Email Address

I am interested in:

☐ Individual Membership	\$30
☐ Journal Subscription (members only)	\$30
☐ Journal Subscription (non-members)	\$60
Subtotal	\$ _____

LDA relies on the generosity of our members and the community to provide information and services that advance our mission.

☐ I want to help LDA, I have enclosed a contribution to support LDA's mission \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Method of payment:

☐ Check (payable to LDA)

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

Card number _____ / _____
Exp. date

Signature

Contributions to LDA are tax deductible

So that we may better serve you, please consider providing us the following OPTIONAL information.

I am a:

☐ Person with Learning Disabilities

☐ Professional ☐ Family member ☐ Other

*Please mail completed application
along with payment to:*

LDA of Minnesota

4301 Highway 7, Suite 160

Minneapolis, MN 55416

ph: 952-922-8374 www.ldaminnesota.org

LDA is a private, non-profit, educational agency that specializes in helping children, youth, and adults with learning disabilities or other learning difficulties maximize their potential so that they and their families may lead more productive and fulfilled lives.

